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THE  
DESCENT  
UPON  
FRANCE  
CONSIDERED;  
In a LETTER to a  
Member of PARLIAMENT.

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SIR,

I Have read and considered the Project of a Descent upon *France*: and have likewise considered the Descents, that have been since designed. But, in my apprehension, the Descents lately Designed, are very different from that which was Projected.

The Busines of the Descent Projected is, to have a good Body of Foot, (which should be about twenty thousand), to be put on Board, and to carry on a Desultory Sea-War. Or in other words, to have a Naval Army for the infesting of the *French* Coasts. These may Land, as they see Occasion, upon any part of *France* that lies towards our Seas: Not to burn and ravage, (for That will signific little), but to seize some weak Port or Creek, or any commodious Place they can take by Storm; and to fortifie it with a large and strong Intrenchment. which may contain the whole twenty thousand and more, but will be full mann'd with ten thousand.

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The Project supposes, that we shall certainly be able to force our Landing in some Place or other. It supposes also, that such a Body of Men, having the Sea and a Fleet behind them, may so intrench themselves, as to defie any Force that can be brought against them. A small Force cannot look upon them: and a great Force will be so long drawing together, that our Men will have the more time to fortifie. Also the Project supposes, that such a Place, having in it a Garrison of ten thousand Men (whereof 1000, or 1500, to be Horse and Dragoons) will maintain it self by the Contribution it Commands: so that it will be no Charge to *England*. And the Men for this Garrison may be had at very short warning: a Footing in *France* being a most powerful Invitation. Which Garrison when it is compleat, Our whole Naval Army may set sail, to seize and fortifie some other Place. And so on to another and another.

The Author of the Project doth not think it necessary (tho' it is confess'd it would be highly convenient) that these Places should have good Ports. Judging it sufficient, if they can receive and secure small Vessels; being relievble by Sea, and not commanded by Land. Such a Place being very well fortified, he says would be as good as *Calice*: which we know is greatly considerable, tho' it have a very mean Harbour. And I add, that any Footing in *France* would be worth a Million. Also I add further, That if no Port of any kind be to be had, we may fortifie upon a Bay, and it is well known to Seamen, which are the most commodious Bays of *France* upon these Seas.

I have given you this short account of the *Projected Descent*. He that would have it at large, with the Reasons for it, and the Advantages proposed by it, may (if he please) have recourse to the Book it self: which was Printed in the beginning of Ninety one, and is since Reprinted.

BUT THE DESCENTS that have been designed these two last Years, seem to be of another Nature. For in all Appearance, they were not for the Making, but the Taking of strong Places. And accordingly they had compleat Trains of Brass Artillery: with all other things fit for Sieges. Whereas to the Fortifying Project, there is only required good store of Iron Guns: which upon Ramparts are as good or better than those of Brass. According to the Informations we had, the first of these Descents was to be carried on by about twelve thousand Foot, and one thousand Horse and Dragoons.

Dragoons. But a much greater Force was intended for the second; that is, thirty thousand Foot, and of Horse and Dragoons several thousands: being near forty thousand in all.

I shall not presume to determine, which of these two ways is best: whether the Attacquing strong Places, or the making weak Places strong. For tho I can comprehend the Fortifying Project, it being easie and obvious; yet the Design of Attacquing is beyond my Reach: and may have much better Reasons for it, than I understand or can imagine. However this seems clear; that in the Attacquing Design there is Difficulty and Danger, but in Fortifying there is on-ly Labour. Of which we must not be sparing, if we mean to pull down this *French King*.

If therefore there must any thing of this kind be done next Year, (and something of this kind must be done, or we are ruin'd); I should humbly advise the way of Seizing and Fortifying, as the safe and sure Way. And tho it be long, tho it be laborious, tho it may seem ignoble; yet we may take it with all its Faults, if it will sufficiently ruine the *French King*. Which it cannot fail to do, if it be well followed.

When I admit this way to be long, it is with respect to the ultimate End it proposes: which is, The getting a Range of Garrisons upon the *French Coast*, the whole length of the Channel. And this is a Work of some time. But we shall soon find a good Effect of this Enterprize. For a few such Garrisons, (as many as may be had in one Summer), must exceedingly distract and confound the *French*; and make them draw much of their Force from *Flanders* and *Germany*. these Garrisons being back'd by our Naval Army, and by all the Forces we have in *England*. Also this way is long, in comparison of a Voyage Royal: which I confess would make quicker Work. But such a Voyage seems not convenient at this time.

I know a Voyage Royal hath been recommended, as the best Way of all other. But it was at a time, when the Confederates were superiour in Strength. Also it was upon a supposition that the War of *Ireland* were over. But this War hath not been ended so soon as it might have been: (for which, and consequently for all our Distresses, we may thank the *Irish Protestants*; who being governed by their Revenge and other Passions, would not endure that any tolerable Conditions should be given to their Enemies): by which means the *French* have gotten such Advantages, that they

are now too strong for us. So that the state of Affairs being so much alter'd, we must likewise alter our Measures.

There is this difference between a Voyage Royal, and the Descent Projected. By a Voyage Royal, or a main Invasion, we might more readily subdue the French, in case we with our Confederates were the stronger. But by the Descent Projected, or a desultory Sea War, (or a Coast War, as it hath been called in some Debates of Parliament); They that are Masters at Sea (as we must be, or I have said nothing all this while); may worst an Enemy much stronger at Land than themselves, and may grow upon him; no Force or Conduct being able to withstand it.

THE DESCENT intended this last Summer, was not in truth a Descent, as we commonly understand the Word, but a main Invasion; and would have wanted nothing but the King's Presence, to make it a Voyage Royal. We must presume that it was well design'd, tho it suffered a disappointment: nor am I minded to look back. Rather, if you please, let us weigh and consider what is best for the future. That is, since a Descent must be (there being no other way to preserve us); whether we should make this Descent with a compleat Army of forty thousand Combatants Horse, Foot and Dragoons; or with a good Body of 20000. Foot.

And in the first place it is confess'd, that if this compleat Army could be had with a Wish, we might probably Wish for the compleat Army. But when we consider what the Charge of it will be, and how hardly this Force can be spared from other Places, we may be of another Mind. So that the other Way seems more inviting, in regard it may be compassed much easier, and will cost much less.

In the second place, when this compleat Army is once landed, they must there abide and take their Fortune: there is then no fear of them any where else. Such Numbers, with their great Equipment, and so many thousand Horses, are too unwieldy to be carried to and fro by Sea, upon every Occasion: and a monstrous Fleet must attend them for that purpose. But a Body of Foot is a thing portable: and can readily Land, and upon Occasion as readily Reimbark and seek new Adventures. So that being always Moving, or in a readiness to Move; they will keep the whole Coast in a high and continual Alarm.

In the third place, Since our Compleat Army must take their Fortune in the place where they first Land; let us see what their Fortune

tune is like to be. 'Tis probable that for a while they will be Masters of the Field : and consequently they may Attacque some strong Place. But there is great reason to fear, that before they have taken it the *French* will be upon them. And if they over-power us, all our Labour is lost ; beside the danger of being routed and destroyed. But a Body of Foot that only minds Fortifying, runs no such Hazards. For there is no likelihood, (if they work with Diligence, and get Guns enow mounted) that the Enemy should be able to force their Intrenchments.

In the fourth place I affirm, that a compleat Army of forty thousand Men, being landed in *Normandy* or *Bretagne* ; can do no more Hurt to the *French* King, nor to the Confederates more Good, than the like Army sent to *Flanders*. Suppose he designs to invade *Flanders* with a hundred and twenty thousand Men: and suppose the Confederates design a hundred thousand to defend it, whereof Our *Quota* is to be forty thousand. But we chuse rather to fall into *Bretagne* with our whole *Quota* : thereby to oblige the *French* to draw off the like Number to oppose our Invasion. And then the *French* will have fourscore thousand in *Flanders* ; and the Confederates, threescore. So that all our Cunning will come to this ; that We shall divide Our Enemies Forces, by dividing our own. But the *French* will still be superiour in *Flanders* by twenty thousand Men ; and our Invasion in *Britain*, being opposed by equal Force, can come to nothing.

But in the fifth place it will not hold, That our invading *Britain* with forty thousand Men, must cause the *French* to draw or keep back as great a Force from *Flanders*. For twenty thousand of their regular Troops, assisted by the *Militia's* of *Britain* and the neighbouring Provinces, will I doubt be found sufficient to oppose our Invasion. So that this Invasion, instead of weakning the *French*, will give them a further Advantage. For now (according to the Suppositions before made) they will have a hundred thousand Men in *Flanders*, against threescore thousand of the Confederates. Also by this means they will exert more of their Force against us : their *Militia* Troops being now employed, which would otherwise ly idle. 'Tis true, this will be a great Burden to their People ; but their People must and will bear it.

Let us now see, whether the Fortifying Project be subject to these Evils. And any one that will consider, may see plainly it is not. It takes up but twenty thousand Foot: the rest of our Foot, and

and all our Horse and Dragoons, being to be employed elsewhere. Twenty thousand on Shipboard will do more Service, both to our selves and to the Common Cause, than a far greater Number in Flanders. For a far greater Force must be brought to oppose them: tho all will be too little, to oppose a Descent of this Nature. It is a *Flaile*, against which there is no *Fence*.

AND NOW, *Sir*, my request to you is, That you will do your best Endeavour in your Station, that this Design be effectually prosecuted. For the Good of *England*, and of *Europe*; both which are now upon the Brink of Destruction. 'Tis this that must put a Hook, in the *French* King's Nose. We must therefore carry on this Descent in the first place: sparing to our Allies all the further Force we can raise. And the Men that are for this Service, must not be expected from far Countries, but should ly Quartered near the Sea Shore, ready to imbark upon the first Orders; the Ships that must Transport them being also ready.

I shall offer one thing more, which is; That beside our Naval Army, there be a Reserve of ten thousand kept ashore in *England*, (whereof at least one thousand should be Horse), to Mann the first Garrison we shall make. With a Fund to raise more, when there shall be like further Occasions. You may rely upon it, that if we have but Money, we shall never want Men, to make good our Footing in *France*. And I must say once more; *Any Footing in France would be worth a Million.*

*Your most humble Servant*

E. L.

POST

## POST-SCRIPT.

Here have been mentioned two sorts of Descents; the one for Taking, the other for Making strong Places. But beside these there is a third Sort: which is for destroying the open Country. And this is the thing, which some understand by a Coast War. Wherein their meaning is, that our Fleet (without the help of Land-Forces on board) should be moving on the *French Coast*, and putting Men ashore as there is occasion: who must make all the havock they can, by Spoiling and Burning.

But this is ignoble with a witness: and little better than barbarous. And I would not have us the Beginners of foul War: nor to fall a destroying without provocation. But to settle strong Garrisons, and command Contributions, (which the Fortifying Project will do), with Military Execution for non-payment; these are things usual, and will not be accounted *foul*.

Beside we must consider, that the Sea Coast of *France* is for the most part barren and miserably poor; and our Destroyers, being all of them Foot, will be able to reach nothing but the meer Sea Coast: so that they cannot get much Good, nor do much Harm. And moreover, a few Troops of Horse will chase them and cut them off.

We must consider further, That if we make foul Work, the Enemy may find times to retaliate, and to measure back to *England* the same Severities. Our Coast is bolder, and less fortified, and richer. Wherefore upon the whole matter we may conclude, That such a Descent as this, will be of no avail to us.

MANY there are that would have no Descent at all: nor any Land Forces, beside those that must Guard *England*. Thinking that We, being an Island, should mind nothing but our Fleet. Here I must confess, that our Fleet ought to be our principal Care. But if the while we neglect our Confederates, and suffer them to be ruined; we must be ruined our selves. If the *French* get *Flanders*, *Holland* must soon follow: with all the *German* Countries upon the *Rhine*. And then, whoever is King of *England*, we shall be in the *French* King's Power. Nay tho we were under that Form of Government which *Mazarine* most dreaded, and tho the whole Nation should

should be united as one Man; yet the *French*, in these their high Circumstances, would be too hard for us.

[Here by the way, I think the Cardinal, (whose Letters are made English and here Printed), is a little extravagant: For he says that *England* would be at least ten times stronger in a Republique, than under a King. If he had said, we should be twice or thrice as strong, it had been something like.]

I know there are some that despise this danger from the *French*: and will maintain; that tho' they should be grown never so great, yet in a War at Sea we should be able to Cope with them. Which is a dangerous Mistake. Perhaps we may advance two or three Millions yearly towards this Sea War. But if the *French* can advance thrice as much, we are sure to be beaten. there being nothing more certain, than that in a War at Sea, seven or eight Millions will beat two or three Millions. And we must not think, that when we are Attacqued by a treble Force, the Odds or Hazard is but three to one against us. For where things are carried by Strength, three to one in the *Match*, is a thousand to one in the *Bett*.

We must therefore do our utmost for the defence of *Flanders*: affording it with all the Force we can make, after our own necessary occasions are provided for. And I think the Descent here recommended will give them more effectual Assistance, than any thing else we can do.

Such another Campagne as this last, (and in the ordinary way we can hardly hope for better), will make our Condition ruinous. We shall then have a dreadful Prospect, of Universal Monarchy and Universal Slavery. Nothing in probability can preserve us, (as you have been told formerly); but such a Descent as is proposed: and such a Descent will probably preserve us. This Descent, 'tis confess'd, will cost some Money; but it will carry no Money out of the Kingdom.

**F I N I S.**

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